

Morton, PA – Since taking office, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) has held nine summits and Congressional hearings in his District on the subjects of economic and educational security. Chairman George Miller of the Education and Labor Committee, and Chairwoman Nadia Velasquez Chair of the House Small Business Committee attended two of the first summits. The objective of each summit is to engage interested, knowledgeable citizens in detailed discussions to support the Congressman's ability to draft and vote on economic and educational legislation to positively affect our District. For example, an amendment to H.R. 1429, passed in 2007, and which focused on providing loan forgiveness to Head Start teachers, was generated from Congressman Sestak's 2007 Educational Summit. Also, Chairman Miller came away from the Educational Summit with a "change in mind" on the value of having "growth" or "value-added" models in "No Child Left Behind" (NCLB), instead of the normal measurements of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) -- and inserted the models into the new NCLB legislation.

"Today brought together employers, school administrators, educators, parents, policy directors, and education experts to discuss the educational focus that we need in these hard economic times and the ever-increasing competitiveness in the global marketplace," said Congressman Sestak. "Our education system must prepare young students to compete for good jobs. To address those pressing concerns, we had four subject panels in the morning: the first three had an Early Childhood Education; Middle & High School Education; and Special Education focus. The last panel focused on the needs of Institutions of Higher Education and Businesses. I hope this conversation will help lead us toward a coordinated and comprehensive plan of action that will work at the county, state, and federal levels to make ours the premier educational system in the nation."

Congressman Sestak also held an afternoon session about bringing businesses and schools together at the middle school level in order to better prepare our community's students for the increasingly competitive workplace of the 21st century, in particular by providing them with the skills necessary for success within the "artisan" workforce. Congressman Sestak invited and encouraged participation by School Districts and Companies in a new program called the Pennsylvania 7th Congressional District Business and Education -- Secure Tomorrow Together (BEST2) Program.

Discussing the program's origin, Congressman Sestak explained, "A review with educators and employers demonstrated to me that high school is too late to take full advantage of the natural curiosity and enthusiasm of young minds, if they decide to pursue an 'artisan' career focused upon high quality manufacturing skills requiring a quality education in science and math, today." The mission of BEST2 is to be America's premier example of partnering middle school students with the businesses and industries that can secure their economic future. It will provide

students and parents with an experience-based curriculum to help young Americans make informed decisions on how to effectively pursue adult careers within the artisan fields. Working with mentors from local trades and professions, students will be exposed to the technologies, work ethic, responsibilities, and satisfaction associated with using all of their scholastic ability, inborn talents, and energy.

In response to the interest in BEST2 expressed by the Superintendents of Interboro, Chichester, Upper Darby, and Southeastern DelCo School Districts, Congressman Sestak held a series of meetings, and requested that the Superintendents identify middle schools to participate in the program's pilot phase.

The Congressman noted, "I must acknowledge the participating middle schools and businesses that will host a pilot program of BEST2. I hear from educational institutions that encounter difficulty in their efforts to get students interested and enrolled in a curriculum that will prepare graduates for high-demand, quality "artisan" jobs. In addition, parents and young people inform me that they have less exposure to the quality vocational options available to them or the true nature of the competition they face from a global workforce. Lastly, businesses have made clear that they cannot find the skilled workers necessary for their most challenging and best paying positions, particularly in the areas of science and math where artisan skills are required. Therefore, I have initiated BEST2 to partner middle school students with the businesses and industries that can help to secure their economic future."

The Committee on Education and Labor, of which Congressman Sestak is a member, has enacted several pieces of legislation in an effort to strengthen the Nation's premier school programs. The Providing Resources Early for Kids Act partners with states to improve the quality of state-funded preschool programs, the No Child Left Inside Act improves environmental education for schoolchildren, and the College Cost Reduction and Access Act, Higher Education Opportunity Act, and the Ensuring Continued Access to Student Loans Act of 2008 make college more affordable and accessible, and protect federal student loans from turmoil in the economy. "I also support the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act, and believe a principal issue that needs to be addressed is the manner in which we calculate Adequate Yearly Progress so that measurement of school performance is not based solely on test scores" stated Sestak. "I am particularly proud of the legislation that was generated from the 2007 summit, and I expect the 111th Congress to do even more and am here today to solicit your views on how the legislative agenda for that body should be shaped."

The Early Childhood Education panel participants included Dr. Cynthia Lightfoot, Professor at Penn State University, Brandywine; Mrs. Renee Bell, Director of Head Start at the Delaware

County Intermediate Unit; Ms. Deborah Mathias, Director of Bureau of Early Learning Services of the Pennsylvania Department of Education; and Ms. Lisa Guernsey, Senior Policy Analyst of the Early Education Initiative for the New America Foundation.

Those participating on the Middle and High School Education panel were: Ms. Leigh Hopkins, National Network Director at National Center on Time and Learning; Mr. F. Joseph Merlino, President, 21st Century Partnership for STEM Education; Ms. Dominique Raymond, Special Assistant to the Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education of the Pennsylvania Department of Education; and Ms. Robin Chait, Senior Policy Analyst of the Center for American Progress (CAP).

The Special Education panel included Dr. William Keilbaugh, Superintendent of the Haverford School District; Ms. Barbara Burger, Special Education Transition Support of the Delaware County Intermediate Unit; Dr. Felicia Hurewitz, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology at Drexel University; and Ms. Patricia Hozella, Assistant Bureau Director, Bureau of Special Education of the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

The panel on College and Business included Dr. Raed Elyadi, Professor, Penn State University, Brandywine Campus; Mr. Phillip Hopkins, Economist, member of the Haverford School District School Board, and member of the Delaware County Intermediate Unit Board of Directors; Dr. Jerry Parker, President, Delaware County Community College; Dr. George Tsetsekos, Dean of Drexel University College of Business; Mr. David Tandberg, Executive Assistant, Office of Postsecondary and Higher Education, Pennsylvania Department of Education; Mr. Nick Mastrosante, Service Director of Steamfitters Local Union 42; and a member of the office of State Representative Bill Adolph, Chairman of the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency.

Congressman Sestak emphasizes scholastic achievement within the community, because a well-trained, educated workforce is key to a strong American economy and middle class. However, the economic crisis, combined with rising tuition prices and declining state support for higher education, threatens to put college out of reach for many students – forcing them to take a semester off or even skip college. Allowing students to be priced out of a college education will only further weaken our workforce and our economy. Economists, the business community, scientists, and others agree that making strategic investments in education is a smart move to grow our economy and regain our competitive edge in the 21st century global economy.

Economists relate that strategic investments in education are one of the best ways to help America become stronger, and more productive and competitive. The Economic Stimulus Bill, which passed the U.S. House of Representatives last week, will make bold investments to

provide children with a 21st century education, modernize our schools and colleges, and make college more affordable. Making investments to modernize our schools will create tens of thousands of jobs. Economists estimate that, overall, this recovery package will save or create more than 250,000 jobs in the education sector, including health care.

Specifically for the 7th Congressional District, for one example, the stimulus will provide \$74,197,800 to area school districts, including \$23,716,500 for construction funding, \$13,961,200 for the execution of Title 1-A, and a \$36,520,100 investment in IDEA special education programs.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Details

1. Making College More Affordable

- A. Pell Grants: \$15.6 billion to increase the maximum Pell Grant by \$500, from \$4,850 to \$5,350.
- B. College Work-Study: \$490 million to support undergraduate and graduate students who work.
- C. Student Loan Limit Increase: Increases limits on unsubsidized Stafford loans by \$2,000.
- D. Student Aid Administration: \$50 million to help the Department of Education administer surging student aid programs while navigating the changing student loan environment.

2. Modernizing our Schools and Universities – Creating Green Jobs

- A. School Construction: \$20 billion, including \$14 billion for K-12 and \$6 billion for higher education, for renovation and modernization, including technology upgrades and energy efficiency improvements. Also includes \$100 million for school construction in communities that lack a local property tax base because they contain non-taxable federal lands such as military bases or Indian reservations, and \$25 million to help charter schools build, obtain, and repair schools.
- B. Ensure that at least 25 percent of funds will support projects that meet green standards, including projects such as installing green roofs, providing more accommodation for alternate transportation, and building renewable energy generation and heating systems.
- C. States may reserve up to 1 percent of their funding to develop a school facilities database and school energy efficiency quality plan.
- D. Make schools energy-efficient, creating jobs and saving taxpayers billions in energy costs.
- E. Provide \$14 billion to improve and repair public school facilities. Funds can be used to:

- 1. Improve the teaching and learning climate;

2. Replace light systems and security doors.
3. Repair heating and ventilation systems;
4. Bring facilities into compliance with fire, health, and safety codes,
5. Make necessary modifications to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act;
6. Implement measures to eliminate exposure to mold, mildew and lead-based paint; and,
7. Provides \$6 billion for colleges and universities for similar repair, renovation and modernization needs.

8. Update Schools with 21st Century Technology

A. Provide \$1 billion for Enhancing Education Through Technology (EdTech) – a program which provides grants to schools to increase access to educational technology and further integrate technology into the classroom with additional computers, science labs and teacher technology training.

9. Investing in K-12 Education

A. IDEA Special Education: \$13 billion for formula grants to increase the federal share of special education costs and prevent these mandatory costs from forcing states to cut other areas of education.

B. Title I Help for Disadvantaged Kids: \$13 billion for grants to help disadvantaged kids in nearly every school district and more than half of all public schools reach high academic standards.

C. Statewide Data Systems: \$250 million for competitive grants to states to design and develop data systems that analyze individual student data to find ways to improve student achievement, providing teachers and administrators with effective tools.

D. Education for Homeless Children and Youth: \$66 million for formula grants to states to provide services to homeless children including meals and transportation when high unemployment and home foreclosures have created an influx of homeless kids.

10. Early Childhood Development

A. Child Care Development Block Grant: \$2 billion to provide child care services for an additional 300,000 children in low-income families while their parents go to work. Today only one out of seven eligible children receives care.

B. Head Start: \$2.1 billion to provide comprehensive development services to help 110,000 additional children succeed in school. Funds are distributed based on need. Only about half of all eligible preschoolers and less than 3 percent of eligible infants and toddlers participate in Head Start. Studies have shown that Head Start is one of the best ways to improve child well-being, increase the educational achievement and future productivity of children, and reduce crime. Studies also show that \$1 invested in early education yields from \$1.25 to \$17 in returns.

C. IDEA Infants and Families: \$600 million for formula grants to help states serve children with disabilities age 2 and younger.

11. Improving Teacher Quality

A. \$300 million, including \$200 million for competitive grants to school districts and states to provide financial incentives for teachers and principals who raise student achievement and close the achievement gaps in high-need schools and \$100 million for competitive grants to states to address teacher shortages and modernize the teaching workforce.

12. Helping States Prevent Teacher layoffs and Other Critical Public Sector Job Losses

A. Budget deficits are already projected for 39 states for the upcoming FY 2010. Initial estimates of these shortfalls total over \$80 billion. As the full extent of FY 2010 deficits become known, state shortfalls are likely to equal \$145 billion; In recent months, 29 states have implemented cuts in education due to budget shortfalls – for example, Georgia has cut aid to school districts by \$95 per pupil; the University of Florida has eliminated 430 faculty and staff positions; and the University of Kentucky is raising its tuition 9 percent; Unless the recovery package is enacted, school districts across the country will have to enact further cuts. There are newspaper stories from across the country. “As many as 2,300 teachers could face midyear layoffs because of the state budget crisis, Los Angeles Unified School District officials said.” (Los Angeles Times, 1/7/09) “Local school officials are preparing for drastic budget cuts...Most Marion and Polk County school districts are considering shortening the school year, asking staff to take salary cuts, or eliminating programs.” (Statesman Journal – Oregon, 1/21/09); Slashing education services undermines future economic growth in a state. This recovery package, by preventing these cutbacks, will enhance future economic growth. Therefore, the bill

creates a \$79 billion state stabilization fund to help prevent education-related layoffs and restore harmful cuts to education funding, including \$39 billion for local school districts and public colleges and universities.

Estimated Allocation of State Fiscal Stabilization Fund: Benefits for Pennsylvania

2009: 1,264,043,000

2010: 1,264,043,000

Total: 2,528,086,000

B. Includes \$15 billion for bonus grants to states for making progress in key areas: placing excellent teachers in high-need schools, making common-sense improvements to assessments, and creating data systems that help schools track progress over time.

C. States must also meet a maintenance-of-effort requirement to show they’re doing their part to fund education.

13. Training Workers for 21st Century Jobs

A. Provides \$4 billion to prepare adult and dislocated workers for green jobs, younger Americans and other emerging industries, including training for retrofitting buildings, green construction and production of renewable energy; and includes \$1.6 billion to create up to one million summer jobs for younger Americans.

14. Creating service and volunteer opportunities to rebuild America

A. Creates work study opportunities for an additional 200,000 college students in a field related to either their major or community service.

B. Invest \$200 million for 16,000 new slots in Americorps which will create more opportunities for more Americans of all generations to serve in their communities.

15. Investing in Excellent Teachers

A. Provides \$200 million in funding for school districts that want to reward educators for outstanding performance or for taking on additional responsibilities and leadership roles.

16. Training and Recruiting Outstanding Teachers for Classrooms that Need them Most

A. Invests \$100 million to address teacher shortages and modernize the teaching workforce.

B. Provides training for new teachers to help them improves overall student achievement.

C. Enhances professional development activities for new teachers.

Strengthens teacher recruitment and training efforts for prospective teachers.

D. Improves the preparation of general education teacher candidates in order to more effectively teach students with disabilities.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.

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